

**Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Energy Hearing on:
“DOE Modernization: Legislation Addressing
Cybersecurity and Emergency Response”
March 14, 2018**

(As prepared for delivery)

Today’s hearing, examining legislation addressing cybersecurity and emergency response, will help us respond to some of the most urgent challenges to the reliability of our nation’s energy infrastructure.

Because our energy infrastructure drives the entire nation’s economy, I’ve made it a top priority for the committee to focus on emerging threats and propose solutions to make our infrastructure more resilient. We’re looking ahead, to make sure we’re doing everything we can to protect our electric grid and our oil and natural gas infrastructure, and to improve our ability to respond when the unexpected happens.

Because nearly all our nation’s energy infrastructure is privately owned and operated, the federal government needs to work closely with representatives of the energy sector and the companies in the supply chain that manufacture equipment and technologies. In today’s highly interconnected world, the threat of cyber-attacks is ever present, so we must be vigilant. We must also be prepared for physical threats, whether they be sabotage or natural disasters, like the hurricanes we experienced this summer.

As the sector-specific agency for energy, the Department of Energy has a very important coordinating role to play. This function was on display earlier this year in response to hurricanes Nate, Maria, Irma and Harvey. Many of us followed DOE’s situation reports on the storms’ impacts and the energy industry’s recovery and restoration activities. DOE’s emergency responders in the field provided critical subject matter expertise and assisted with waivers and special permits to aid restoration. To prevent a major fuel supply emergency, DOE’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve provided much needed oil to refiners. DOE also analyzed electricity supply to determine whether it needed to draw on its

Federal Power Act authorities to secure the grid.

Today's hearing will examine four bipartisan bills designed to improve DOE's energy security and emergency response authorities. I want to thank our members for working across the aisle on these important issues.

I join Chairman Upton in welcoming back Under Secretary of Energy Mark Menezes to join our first panel. I look forward to his comments on the department's energy security priorities and its views on the legislation.

I also want to welcome the witnesses appearing on the second panel. We'll hear a range of perspectives from state government, the energy industry, and supply chain manufacturers. We're also joined by a witness from DOE's Idaho National Lab, which I had the privilege of visiting earlier this week. Idaho National Lab, or INL, is the nation's leading nuclear research laboratory. INL also has unique capabilities to test system-wide cybersecurity applications on a full scale electric grid loop. INL is one of seventeen DOE national labs tackling the critical scientific challenges of our time and I want to thank INL leadership and staff for sharing their research and expertise with the Committee.

This subcommittee has held dozens of hearings on energy infrastructure and produced several bipartisan bills to improve the resilience and reliability of our nation's energy delivery systems. These bills will ultimately make our nation more energy secure and reduce the cost of fuels and electricity for consumers. At the end of the day, if we focus on what's best for consumers we'll continue make good policy decisions.